

THE BLACK BARBERSHOP HEALTH OUTREACH PROGRAM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLACK BARBERSHOP HEALTH OUTREACH PROGRAM LAUNCHES NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN

MAY DESIGNATED AS "BLACK BARBERSHOP MONTH" FOR STATE OF CALIFORNIA

(LOS ANGELES, April 24, 2008) – Dr. Bill Releford, founder of the Diabetic Amputation Prevention Foundation (DAP), will offer free diabetes and high-blood pressure screenings to African American men at over 100 black owned barbershops throughout the state of California, Sat. May 3, 2008 from 10am to 3pm. The Black Barbershop Health Outreach Program, sponsored in part by The American Heart Association, Abbott Laboratories, U.C.L.A., Kaiser Permanente and KJLH 102.3 radio station, will expand on the success of the 2007 Los Angeles pilot project and screen African American men from Sacramento to San Diego. The state of Illinois will launch its campaign May 10, 2008 in Chicago in over 40 barbershops.

The California Legislative Black Caucus unanimously agreed to designate the month of May as Black Barbershop Month for the entire state of California. Caucus member Assemblyman Curren D. Price, Jr. has supported Dr. Releford and the program since its inception. "The Black Barbershop Health Outreach Program provides an unprecedented and vital service to the needs of a population that has been underserved for far too long," said Assemblymember Price. "In these uncertain economic times, when health care is often unaffordable and becoming less accessible, the Black Barbershop Outreach Program will be providing the health education and care that our community desperately needs."

The Black Barbershop Health Outreach Program is the first initiative of its kind to exclusively address health care disparities in African American men on a national level. While medical advances and milestones benefit the general U.S. population, African American men experience the lowest life expectancy rate of any segment in American society. Undetected cardiovascular disease is contributory to disproportionate mortality and morbidity among African American men. Forty percent (40%) of African American men die prematurely from cardiovascular disease as compared to 21% of white men. Black men suffer far worse health conditions than any other racial group in America. There are a number of reasons for this. They include racial discrimination; a lack of affordable health services; poor health education, cultural barriers; poverty, employment that does not carry health insurance; insufficient medical and social services catering to black men.

According to Dr. Releford, the mission of the DAP Foundation's Black Barbershop Health Outreach program is to screen over 500,000 African American men by the year 2011 for diabetes and hypertension and promote healthy lifestyle changes. "The Black Barbershop has traditionally been a place where black men from all segments of society could come together to talk about life, family, relationships and now I am hoping we can start talking about our health," explains Donte Kelly, the Black Barbershop Outreach Coordinator.

The DAP Foundation's African American Men's Outreach Program seeks to partner with community groups / organizations to reduce the incidence of health conditions that adversely affect African American males by utilizing education, prevention and early detection by screening activities. Our efforts will be duplicated in other metropolitan areas such as Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Baltimore and New York.

www.blackbarbershop.org